MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE MINORITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETING
July 2, 1977, Statler-Hilton Hotel, New York City

The meeting began at 3:30 p.m. Everyone introduced him/herself and was asked to correct and/or add information to the Minority Alumni Directory. It was emphasized that each person should keep in touch with class secretaries at least once a year so that current information is readily available.

The question of whether or not the group should be formally organized was raised and a discussion of the areas in which we as an organized group would be involved ensued. There seemed to be no question that an organized group is necessary and that the main areas of involvement should be admissions, placement, fund raising and support for the minority students enrolled at any given time.

ADMISSIONS

Admissions is the area of greatest need at the present time. In the discussion that followed several questions were raised. What kind of commitment does Middlebury have to minority students? Middlebury has continued its commitment to students with potential rather than just accepting "winners" (students with traditional qualifications - 600 SAT's, top 10% of the class, B+ average). Middlebury is virtually alone in doing this because most of our competitors have greatly reduced or curtailed their acceptances of "potential winners" in favor of "traditional winners".

IS ORIENTATION WORTHWHILE?

Both the tangible and intangible measures show that Orientation is worthwhile. An evaluation is done every year and has proved the program worthwhile. This year a group of trustees who reviewed Orientation felt there should be more money for the program. Of the colleges like Middlebury that are having problems with retention, the major difference in their programs is the lack of an Orientation program. Several other colleges thinking about instituting an Orientation program have contacted us for ideas. Many of our upperclassmen who have gone through Orientation express an interest in working with the program. The need in the early years of Orientation seemed to be primarily social; now the focus is academic although social problems are not neglected. Last year was the first year a math course was offered during Orientation. Subsequent to the program, nine freshman enrolled in math courses; only one student failed a math course. Previous to this, most students stayed clear of the Math and Science Departments and many of those who attempted courses in those areas failed.

IS THERE A POSSIBILITY OF THE COLLEGE LAYING OFF ON THE MINORITY ALUMNI THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF MINORITY RECRUITMENT?

No, Fred Neuberger, Director of Admissions, is well aware of what the trends are in the minority student market and realizes that there are fewer students headed for college and that there is more competition. Mr. Neuberger has always been a strong supporter of our attempts to bring more minority students to Middlebury and there is no reason to believe that he will not continue his support. The regular alumni association has an admissions support program and we should be able to profit from their experience.

IS THE RATIO OF ACCEPTANCES TO MATRICULANTS GREATER FOR MINORITY STUDENTS THAN FOR WHITE STUDENTS?

It varies a great deal and often hinges on financial aid. The financial aid ratios change; if there is an imbalance one year, less aid may be given out the next year. 51.5% of those accepted this year are matriculating.

SHOULD THE EMPHASIS BE PLACED ON YIELD OR ON GETTING APPLICATIONS?

Getting people to apply is the priority. It is important to have a good pool from which to make selections. Once a good pool is established, low-keyed aggressiveness (having alumni call accepted students to ask if they have any questions, attending and urging students to attend yield gatherings, etc.) will be important. It was suggested that it is important to start contacts with students earlier than 12th grade. It would be good if we had funds to bring 9th and 10th graders up to the campus once just to see what Middlebury is like.

HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DOES AN ALUMNUS/A HAVE REGARDING ADMISSION OF A STUDENT?

The comments alumni make are sometimes pivotal in the admissions decision. The decision making is still very personal and all of the information we can get is helpful. Often times alumni can elaborate on the importance of an activity or a prize that is very important in his or her community but may be overlooked by the Admissions personnel.

WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN IN ADMISSION IN THE COMING YEARS?

The pool is smaller so the alumni group will be an especially important factor in recruitment. The Admissions and Dean's Offices will have to remain close but most important, the minority alumni will have to be a cohesive group which keeps returning to the campus and which, in the end, will provide the continuity.

It is expected that the Minority Alumni Admissions Program will proceed along the lines of The Alumni Admissions Support Program which has already been established. Committees will be set up in natural areas (Washington, D.C., New York City, Northern New Jersey, Hartford) and will be expected to interview students, talk with parents, attend and encourage prospective students to attend yield gatherings and other information sessions, attend college fairs or college nights when possible and identify schools and agencies which admissions personnel should visit.

PLACEMENT

While admissions is the priority concern, placement is extremely important. Middlebury's record in graduate school and job placement for our minority graduates has been extremely good; much better than that of schools similar to Middlebury. There is a lot of interest in this area especially as students are looking more toward careers in business than in education as had been true until recently.

The following suggestions were made:

1) During Orientation students should receive some career counseling to give them some insight into what's available, what preparation is necessary, how competitive the different fields are and what is really involved in the field. It is felt that many of the minority alumni have inside information about the qualities different companies look for and what different jobs entail as a result of their having looked for and worked in different positions.

2) Once each year when the Minority Alumni group meets on campus, three or four alumni should hold a seminar the day before the meeting and talk about their fields, writing résumés, how to find and follow-up leads and presenting oneself in an interview.

3) Anyone working for a company which interviews on college campuses, but does not come to Middlebury should find out why not and suggest that they do come to Middlebury. It would be good to get a minority interviewer to the campus if possible.

4) Placement should be a prime activity of the Black Student Union. The Black Student Union Constitution designates that one of its committees is supposed to coordinate with the Placement Office. It was emphasized that students have to put forth some effort and go to the Placement Office but that perhaps one of the administrators could go to a B.S.U. meeting and give the students a starting point. The Minority Alumni Placement Committee should coordinate its efforts with the Black Student Union Placement Committee so that there would be a central location and/or person to which job leads and information for minority students about job and graduate school opportunities can be directed.

5) Minority alumni should keep copies of their résumés on file so that the minority students can use them as models.

6) If possible, minority alumni should try to develop Winter Term internships at their jobs for students.

7) Minority alumni addresses should be kept up-to-date so that minority students coming to your area might be able to stay with you and avoid the cost of lodging and meals which is often a deterrent for students who might be able to provide transportation to an interview but feel they can't afford to stay in a hotel and eat at restaurant prices.

FUND RAISING

Only a few people indicated an interest in fund raising. We need more people involved in this area because although the minority financial aid budget is currently one-third of the total financial aid budget, there are bound to be cut-backs. A few years ago Middlebury could commit one-third of the budget to minority students and know that a fairly large number would withdraw or fail out; last year, only two freshmen failed out. Also, the amount of financial aid provided still leaves minority students in sort of a bind in the Middlebury atmosphere.

Aside from money for financial aid, money raised could be used to support black professors, for books, etc.

It was emphasized that in addition to being involved in this group, it is essential that minority alumni be involved in their area alumni groups.

CONSTITUTION

The minority alumni constitution is patterned on the alumni constitution; the construction is loose as we are friends with a common bond.

ARTICLE II: There was no discussion on this article submitted with the changes made at the April meeting.

ARTICLE III: Section 1. An addition was made following "Auxiliary". Section I now reads, "There shall be three types of members, Active, Honorary and Auxiliary. All members shall have voting privileges".

Article IV: Section 2. It is the general understanding that Ex-officio means without the right to vote or hold office. The general consensus is that it is necessary for minority faculty members and administrators to meet with the minority alumni.

Section 3. "Corresponding Secretary" was added to the list of officers at the April meeting.

Section 5. This section was added after the April meeting by the sub-group consisting of Delrita Hunter Abercrombie, Bruce Gill, Neilda Lee and Deborah Thomas. An addition was made to part 1 after "Election Committee". Part 1 now reads "Nominations for council members shall be solicited through a nominating ballot circulated by the Election Committee six weeks prior to the Annual Meeting of the Alumni Association." There was some discussion of part 2 and it was the general consensus that if someone leaves one position for another position, the unexpired term will be filled by an appointee designated by the Executive Council. It was also decided to add after "term of one (1) year" the sentence "Hereafter, all terms will be three (3) years." After some discussion of part three and the difficulty of obtaining a majority vote for each position which would often necessitate run-offs, it was decided to change "majority" to "plurality". The last sentence of part three now reads "The nominee who receives a plurality vote from the ballots returned will hold that position".

Section 6. It was decided that the budget would be set at the annual meeting. It now reads "A budget shall be set each year at the Annual Meeting."

ARTICLE V: Because no provision was made for by-laws which will be necessary for specific operating procedures and for incorporation, Article V was changed to read: "Amendments to the Constitution and the By-laws can be made by a two-thirds vote of the active members of the Association." A provision for emergency by-laws was also added as follows: "Emergency by-laws which will be in effect for no longer than three months can be enacted by the Executive Council."

Article I: It was suggested that we limit ideas for a name for the organization to three on which we would then vote. The names presented were: Middlebury College Black Alumni Association and Middlebury College Minority Alumni Association. By a majority vote, Middlebury College Minority Alumni Association was chosen.

The Constitution with the above changes was approved by a vote of 24 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.

ELECTIONS

There was agreement that a small group is needed to oversee the Association for a short period of time in order to get things going and to set up the elections. It was felt that these elections should be held as close to the coming September as possible. It was suggested that officers be elected for four months or for one year. Another suggestion that a small group or governing committee be chosen at this meeting to do the mailings for elections was made. It was finally decided that elections for the terms specified in the Constitution will be made and announced by mail over the next few months. Arnold McKinney and Edward Young will send the mailings out. Minutes and Ballots will be sent out to each potential member; nominations will then be returned and ballots will be drawn up and mailed. When the ballots are returned and counted results and the location of the next meeting will be mailed.

Several questions regarding meetings arose. The general feeling was that the annual meeting should be held in New York or Boston because that is the time we expect the most people to attend as elections, ratifications, amendments, etc. will take place at this meeting. Because the largest number of members live in close promimity to New York and others feel they have some connections in New York, the annual meeting will be held here. We also have two free meeting places in New York which are centrally located.

After much discussion of possible annual meeting dates (August, September, October, Thanksgiving) it was decided by majority voice consent that October was the best time. Because Homecoming and Parent's Weekends are generally held on either the second, third or fourth weekends in October, the annual meeting will be held on the first weekend.

The large body will decide how often the Executive Council will meet and then the Executive Council will schedule its meetings. One Executive Council meeting will always be held on the Middlebury campus while school is in session because one of our functions is to provide support for the minority students enrolled at any given time. Just our presence on campus means that there was something positive in our Middlebury experience which makes us return.

Questions about how often the large body and the Executive Council will meet and when meetings (other than the annual meeting) will be held will be resolved when the by-laws are drawn up.

DUES

All of the Middlebury College Alumni Associations are self-supporting. Discussion about dues centered around whether we should have one flat fee for everyone, student and recent graduate memberships, the definition of recent graduates, optional dues with amounts determined by each individual, optional dues amounts with a minimum. The optional amounts would make it difficult to make up a budget so it was decided to establish set dues on a tier system. Dues for students and recent graduates (up to and including the third year after graduation) are $10. per year. For other alumni/ae with the exception of an alumnus and alumna who are married, dues are $50. per year. For married alumni the joint dues are $75. per year. Members can always send more than the amount specified. On the other hand, if a particular year is bad for someone (unemployment or other extenuating circumstances) that person should send whatever he/she can. After a discussion about whether or not in these circumstances the person should send a letter of explanation along with his/her dues, the conclusion was reached that this is unnecessary. Everyone should make sure to indicate that money sent for dues is so designated. Dues will not be payable until after the annual meeting scheduled for October of 1977.

The meeting ended at 7:45 p.m.

ATTENDANCE - MINORITY ASSOCIATION MEETING - July 2, 1977

ALUMNI

Elsie Augustave '76
Gladstone Chandler '55
Denyse Evelyn '75
Joseph Ferguson '61
Denise House '77
Floyd Huckaby '76
Delrita Hunter (Abercrombie) '70
Calvin Johnson '74
Howard Johnson '76
Marcos Jones '71
Julia Lara '74
Neilda Lee '72
Jose Lopez '73
Arnold McKinney '70
Eugene Oliver '70
Stephanie Palmer '74
Kathi Perry '76
Donna Peters '75
James Reese '77
Michelle Roberson '76
Karen Smallwood (McKinney) '73
Calvin Smiley '76
Elise Washington '73
Winifred Whitmore '77
Edward Young '77

FACULTY

Gayle Pemberton (Department of American Literature)